

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

COMCARIBSEAFRON

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SUBJECT: DOMINICAN ELECTIONS

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SUMMARY: ON MARCH 24TH, 62 CANDIDATES WILL CONTEST 21 SEATS
IN THE DOMINICAN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. THE OUTCOME OF THE
ELECTION IS HIGHLY UNCERTAIN. MANY DOMINICANS ARE TIRED OF THE
RULING DLP EVEN THOUGH THE NEW PREMIER, PATRICK R. JOHN,
HAS HAD A RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL SHORT TERM OF OFFICE. WITH
FOUR PARTIES AND 11 INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES RUNNING, THE
INDEPENDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PLAY A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE
ELECTIONS. SO FAR, THE OPPOSITION PARTIES AND INDEPENDENTS
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ARE UNITED ONLY IN THEIR DESIRE TO BE RID OF THE DLP,

HOWEVER. THE RADICAL MND HAS BEEN CAMPAIGNING FOR INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES ANTHONY F. JOSEPH AND CHARLES A. SAVARIN. ANOTHER ALLEGED MND MEMBER, ELOI SYLVESTER, IS ALSO RUNNING AS AN INDEPENDENT. ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY, IT APPEARS THAT THE DLP, FACED BY A STRONG, IF DIVIDED, OPPOSITION AND SUFFERING THE DISADVANTAGES OF A PARTY TOO LONG IN POWER, MAY FAIL TO WIN A MAJORITY AND MAY SEE ITS 15-YEAR RULE ENDED BY A COALITION GOVERNMENT OF OPPOSITION PARTIES AND INDEPENDENTS. THE DLP WILL PROBABLY NOT WIN MORE THAN TEN SEATS AND MAY WIN AS FEW AS SEVEN SEATS. THE PROGRESSIVE LABOUR PARTY SHOULD WIN AT LEAST TWO SEATS AND POSSIBLY MORE; THE DOMINICA FREEDOM PARTY AT LEAST FOUR SEATS AND POSSIBLY AS MANY AS SIX; AND THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES BETWEEN FOUR AND SIX. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING THE WEEK OF MARCH 10, THE EMBASSY'S POLOFF VISITED DOMINICA AND TALKED WITH THE LEADERS OF ALL THE MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPS EXPECTED TO TAKE PART IN THE MARCH 24 GENERAL ELECTIONS, EXCEPT THE CARIBBEAN FEDERAL PARTY WHICH IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR.

2. DESPITE THE PERSONAL POPULARITY OF PREMIER PATRICK R. JOHN, WHO SUCCEEDED THE LACKLUSTER EDWARD O. LEBLANC AS PREMIER ONLY EIGHT MONTHS AGO, MANY DOMINICANS - INCLUDING SOME WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE JOHN RETURNED TO OFFICE - BELIEVE THAT THE DLP DURING ITS FIFTEEN YEARS UNDER LEBLANC DID NOT ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING FOR DOMINICA. HOWEVER, THESE SAME DOMINICANS GENERALLY GIVE JOHN HIGH MARKS FOR HIS SHORT TERM OF OFFICE. THEY LIST HIS TOUGH LAW AND ORDER CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE OUTLAWED DREADS, THE STARTING OF THE DEEP WATER HARBOR AT ROSEAU WHICH HAS PROVIDED A LARGE NUMBER OF JOBS, AND HIS SIGNING OF TWO CONTRACTS, ONE WITH KAHN TIMBER LTD. OF THE UK TO REOPEN THE LOCAL TIMBER INDUSTRY AND ANOTHER WITH A CANADIAN COMPANY TO BUILD 200 HOUSING UNITS AT THE BATH ESTATES AS JOHN'S MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE. HOWEVER, THE DLP'S OTHER CANDIDATES DO NOT SHARE JOHN'S POPULARITY. MOST OF THE TWENTY-ONE DLP CANDIDATES ARE MEDIOCRE IN COMPARISON WITH THE OPPOSITION CANDIDATES, AND DOMINICANS SMARTING FROM THE BAD PRESS THAT DOMINICA HAS RECEIVED LATELY FROM THE INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MEDIA WANT REPRESENTATIVES WHO WILL PRESENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A FAVORABLE IMAGE OF DOMINICA OVERSEAS AND AT REGIONAL CONFERENCES. EXCLUDING JOHN, IT IS FELT THAT ONLY FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE EUSTACE H. FRANCIS, MICHAEL DOUGLAS, BROTHER OF BLACK POWER ADVOCATE ROOSEVELT "ROSIE" DOUBLAS, AND J. OLIVER SERAPHINE, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE DLP, POSSESS THE QUALIFICATIONS TO PROJECT A FAVORABLE IMAGE OF DOMINICA. IN TACIT RECOGNITION OF THE VALIDITY OF THE CHARGES THAT THE DLP HAS NOT ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING IN FIFTEEN YEARS, JOHN HAS DUMPED ALL

FORMER MEMBERS OF THE LEBLANC GOVERNMENT EXCEPT EDUCATION MINISTER H.L. CHRISTIAN. THUS, WHILE THE DLP IS THE SAME PARTY THAT LEBLANC PRESIDED OVER, JOHN CAN PLAUSIBLY ARGUE THAT HERE IS A COMPLETELY NEW TEAM UNDER HIS "NEW, YOUNG, AND DYNAMIC" LEADERSHIP. NEVERTHELESS, HE HAS NOT THUS FAR BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN CHANGING THE DLP IMAGE.

3. THE THREE OPPOSITION PARTIES AND THE ELEVEN INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES ARE UNITED ONLY IN THEIR DESIRE TO OUST JOHN AND THE DLP. THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION PARTY IN THE LAST ELECTIONS WHICH WERE HELD IN OCTOBER 1970, THE DOMINICA FREEDOM PARTY, IS FIELDING SIXTEEN CANDIDATES. WHILE MANY DOMINICANS RECOGNIZE THAT THE DFP HAS THE MOST COMPETENT AND QUALIFIED CANDIDATES TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, ITS CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH THE BUSINESS INTERESTS AND THE MIDDLE CLASS HAMPERS THE DFP IN ITS DRIVE TO WIN AN OUTRIGHT MAJORITY IN THE HOUSE. THUS, THE DFP HAS ADOPTED A STRATEGY OF CONTESTING ONLY THOSE CONSTITUENCIES IN WHICH IT HAS A CHANCE OF WINNING IN EXPECTATION OF BEING THE DOMINANT PARTNER IN ANY COALITION GOVERNMENT. CERTAIN INDEPENDENTS IN THOSE FOUR CONSTITUENCIES WHERE THE DFP IS NOT RUNNING CANDIDATES LIKE CHARLES A. SAVARIN, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE DOMINICA CIVIL SERVICE ASSOCIATION, AND PATTISON "PAT" A.S. STEVENS, SON OF FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER W.A.S. STEVENS, ARE COOPERATING WITH AND BEING SUPPORTED BY THE DFP. IT IS EXPECTED THEY WILL JOIN WITH THE DFP, IF ELECTED, TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

4. THE PROGRESSIVE LABOUR PARTY, WHICH GREW OUT OF LAST SUMMER'S SPLIT IN DLP OVER FIGHT BETWEEN PATRICK JOHN AND RONALD O.P. ARMOUR TO SUCCEED LEBLANC AS BOTH PARTY LEADER AND PREMIER, IS CONTESTING ONLY EIGHT SEATS DESPITE ITS PREVIOUSLY AVOWED INTENTION TO CONTEST ALL TWENTY-ONE SEATS. THE PLP, LED BY RONALD'S BROTHER JENNER B.M. ARMOUR, FORMER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DLP VICE PRESIDENT UNDER LEBLANC, HAS MADE THE DLP'S NEGLECT OF, AND JOHN'S LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF AGRICULTURE ITS PRINCIPAL CAMPAIGN ISSUE. THE ARMOUR BROTHERS, WHO ARE WEALTHY BANANA PLANTERS WITH LARGE ESTATES IN THE NORTH OF DOMINICA, ARE HOPING TO PIN THE BLAME FOR LOW BANANA PRICES ON JOHN'S GOVERNMENT AND CAPTURE THE MAJORITY OF THE IMPORTANT SMALL BANANA GROWERS' VOTE FOR THE PLP.

5. CONTESTING ONLY SIX CONSTITUENCIES, THE NEWLY FOUNDED CARIBBEAN FEDERAL PARTY IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THE ELECTIONS BOTH BECAUSE OF ITS RECENT ARRIVAL ON THE POLITICAL SCENE AND BECAUSE OF THE RELATIVELY UNKNOWN QUALITY OF ITS CANDIDATES. THE CFP'S MANIFESTO WRITTEN BY ITS FOUNDER, CHRISTIAN M. DAVID, CALLS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CARIBBEAN FEDERATION AND EXPRESSES THE VIEW THAT THE

"INDUSTRIALIZATION OF DOMINICA DEPENDS UPON THE ISLAND FORMING PART OF A WIDER CARIBBEAN ENTITY." HOWEVER, CARIBBEAN FEDERALISM IS NOT EXACTLY A BURNING ISSUE IN DOMINICA AND CERTAINLY NOT ONE CALCULATED TO ATTRACT VOTES. THE CFP'S GLOOMY SLOGAN IS "TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR DOMINICA."

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6. IN ADDITION TO THE FOUR PARTIES CONTESTING THE ELECTIONS, THERE ARE ELEVEN INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES. THE MORE PROMINENT AMONG THEM ARE THE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED SAVARIN AND STEVENS, ANTHONY F. JOSEPH, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE DOMINICA AMALGAMATED WORKERS UNION, CONRAD W. CYRUS, A HIGHLY REGARDED AGRONOMIST, AND MOVEMENT FOR A NEW DOMINICA SYMPATHIZER ELOI SYLVESTER. DESPITE DIFFERENT IDEOLOGIES AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES, THE INDEPENDENTS ARE UNITED IN THEIR BELIEF THAT IF DOMINICA IS TO PROGRESS, THEN JOHN AND DLP MUST GO. LABOR LEADER SAVARIN BE-

CAME THE FIRST CANDIDATE FOR THE HOUSE WHEN HE ANNOUNCED ON JANUARY 4, FIVE WEEKS BEFORE THE HOUSE WAS DISSOLVED, HIS INTENTION TO CONTEST THE PORTSMOUTH SEAT. RUNNING AGAINST THE DLP'S DOUGLAS AND THE CFP'S DAVID, SAVARIN WAS REGARDED AS A SURE FAVORITE TO WIN UNTIL DOUGLAS BEGAN CHARGING THAT SAVARIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS JUST A MEMBER OF THE DFP AND THAT HE WOULD JOIN THAT PARTY, IF ELECTED. NOW DOUGLAS IS CONSIDERED EVEN WITH SAVARIN IN THE CONTEST FOR THE PORTSMOUTH SEAT. ALTHOUGH THE REVOLUTIONARY MND IS NOT CONTESTING THE GENERAL ELECTIONS AS A PARTY, IT TOO SUPPORTS THE OPPOSITION CONSENSUS THAT THE 15-YEAR RULE OF THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT MUST BE ENDED. CONSEQUENTLY MND LEADERS, ESPECIALLY ATHERTON MARTIN AND DR. WILLIAM "PARA" RIVIERE, HAVE BEEN OPENLY SUPPORTING AND ACTIVELY SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES, PARTICULARLY SAVARIN AND JOSEPH. ACCORDING TO SOME DOMINICANS, THE LATTER WOULD NORMALLY STAND A GOOD CHANCE OF BEING ELECTED TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. HOWEVER, OUT OF EGOTISM, JOSEPH DECIDED TO CONTEST THE GOODWILL SEAT IN WHICH HIS OPPONENTS ARE JOHN AND STAR S. LESTRADE OF THE DFP; FEW, IF ANY DOMINICANS BELIEVE JOSEPH OR LESTRADE HAS ANY CHANCE TO DEFEAT THE POPULAR JOHN. INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE SYLVESTER, WHO IS OFFICE MANAGER OF THE MND-GUIDED CASTLE BRUCE AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE, IS REGARDED AS MARTIN'S STAND-IN IN THE RACE FOR THE CASTLE BRUCE SEAT. DESPITE SYLVESTER'S MND CONNECTIONS, THE MND HAS APPARENTLY MADE NO SPECIAL EFFORT TO AID HIM AGAINST HIS THREE OPPONENTS, OF WHOM ONLY THE DLP'S ROMANUS BANNIS, AN AGRICULTURE EXTENSION OFFICER AND MEMBER OF THE CASTLE BRUCE VILLAGE COUNCIL, POSES A SERIOUS THREAT TO SYLVESTER'S ELECTION TO THE HOUSE.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SOME DOMINICA LABOUR PARTY LEADERS CONFIDENTLY PREDICT THAT THE PARTY WILL BE RETURNED TO POWER WITH FIFTEEN SEATS, A SOURCE CLOSE TO PREMIER JOHN HAS SAID THAT JOHN BELIEVES THE DLP WILL CAPTURE THIRTEEN SEATS. ON THE BASIS OF THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY, IT APPEARS THAT THE DLP WILL NOT WIN MORE THAN TEN SEATS AND MAY WIN AS FEW AS SEVEN SEATS. ONLY THE SEATS CONTESTED BY JOHN HIMSELF, CHRISTIAN, AND SERAPHINE ARE BELIEVED TO BE CERTAIN DLP SEATS. THE DLP'S CLAYTON T. BAPTISTE IS RATED AHEAD OF ATTORNEY AND UNOFFICIAL LEADER OF THE DFP EUGENIA CHARLES IN THE RACE TO REPRESENT THE ROSEAU CONSTITUENCY. ALTHOUGH THE DFP HAS NEVER BEEN STRONG IN ROSEAU, WHILE THE DFP IS THE NATURAL STANDARD BEARER FOR ITS MIDDLE-CLASS CONSTITUENCY, MISS CHARLES IS PERSONALLY UNPOPULAR WITH THE VOTERS, WHO RESENT HER GREAT WEALTH. THE PORTSMOUTH CONTEST BETWEEN THE DLP'S DOUGLAS AND INDEPENDENT SAVARIN COULD GO EITHER WAY.

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8. THE ARMOURS' PROGRESSIVE LABOUR PARTY SHOULD WIN AT LEAST TWO SEATS AND POSSIBLY MORE. IN THE PAIX BOUCHE CONSTITUENCY, PLP CHAIRMAN JENNER ARMOUR IS EXPECTED TO WIN WITHOUT DIFFICULTY OVER HIS SOLE OPPONENT, THE DLP'S RANDOLPH BANNIS. CARIB INDIAN CHIEF MAS CLEM C. FREDERICK IS ALSO FAVORED TO DEFEAT ANOTHER CARIB, THE DLP'S LAWRENCE DARROUX, FOR THE SEAT REPRESENTING THE ATKINSON CONSTITUENCY WHICH INCLUDES THE CARIB INDIAN RESERVATION. HOWEVER, RONALD ARMOUR IS NOT GIVEN MUCH OF A CHANCE TO WIN THE NEWTOWN SEAT AGAINST HIS TWO FORMIDABLE OPPONENTS, THE DLP'S FRANCIS AND THE DFP'S ANNETTE P. ST. HILAIRE, MAYOR OF ROSEAU. (OTHERWISE, THE NEWTOWN RACE IS A TOSS-UP.)

9. THE DOMINICA FREEDOM PARTY WILL WIN AT LEAST FOUR SEATS AND POSSIBLY AS MANY AS SIX SEATS. DFP CANDIDATES R. STANLEY FADELLE, VANOUST JNO. CHARLES, A. ANTHONY CASIMIR, AND ANTHONY MOISE, OPPOSITION LEADER IN THE DISSOLVED HOUSE, ARE CONSIDERED LIKELY WINNERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CONSTITUENCIES OF PETITE SAVANNE, ST. JOSEPH, GRAND BAY, AND SOUFRIERE. HOWEVER, OTHER DFP STALWARTS SUCH AS MISS CHARLES, DFP CHAIRMAN ALVIN ARMAN-TRADING, AND A. RUPERT SORHAINDO ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE DIFFICULTY IN WINNING SEATS IN THE HOUSE.

10. AS A GROUP, THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES SHOULD DO WELL. THEY SHOULD WIN AT LEAST FOUR HOUSE SEATS AND MAY WIN AS MANY AS SIX. LIKELY TO WIN SEATS ARE PERRY F. ALCID, CONRAD CYRUS, "PAT" STEVENS, AND ELFORD R. HENRY. THEY ARE CONTESTING THE COTTAGE, MORNE/JAUNE/RIVIERE CYRIKF MARIGOT, AND WESLEY CONSTITUENCIES RESPECTIVELY. SAVARIN AND SYLVESTER ARE RATED EVEN WITH OR AHEAD OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OPPONENTS.

11. THE STRONG DISSATISFACTION WITH THE RULING DLPN WHICH MANIFESTED ITSELF IN THE UNUSUALLY LARGE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES CONTESTING THE TWENTY-ONE HOUSE SEATS IN THIS ISLAND OF 72,000 PERSONS, COULD RESULT IN THE AREA'S FIRST COALITION GOVERNMENT. (THE RECENT MITCHELL-PPP ALLIANCE GOVERNMENT IN ST. VINCENT WAS NOT A TRUE COALITION GOVERNMENT SINCE MITCHELL DID NOT HAVE A PARTY BEHIND HIM.) IF THE DLP FAILS TO WIN THE ELEVEN SEATS NECESARRY TO FORM A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE DFP, PLP, AND THE INDEPENDENTS WILL JOIN TOGETHER TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT DESPITE IDEOLOGICAL AND OTHER

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DIFFERENCES. HOWEVER, SUCH A COALITION GOVERNMENT PROBABLY WOULD NOT LAST LONG SINCE THERE WOULD BE A CONTEST FOR THE JOB OF PREMIER BETWEEN SAVARIN AND JENNER ARMOUR, BOTH STRONG- MINDED

MEN, AND DIFFERENCES IN PHILOSOPHY AMONG THE PARTNERS WOULD BE
REFLECTED IN DIVERGENT APPROACHES TO PRACTICAL PROBLEMS.
DOMINICA, ALREADY TOTTERING ON THE BRINK OF ECONOMIC BANKRUPTCY,
THEN WOULD VERY LIKELY UNDERGO A PERIOD OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY
WORSE THAN THAT EXPERIENCED DURING THE DREAD CRISIS. END COMMENT.
BRITTON

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